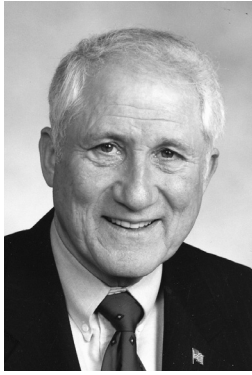


## Rep. John Ahern

## 2011 Session Review



Dear Friends and Neighbors,

The 2011 sessions ended May 25 after a 30-day special session. During those five months, the Legislature:

- passed a \$32 billion operating budget,
- adopted a capital budget containing \$35 million to begin construction of a new medical school in Spokane, and
- made important steps toward reforming programs critical to getting Washington back to work.

Unfortunately, there were also several missed opportunities, such as the lack of prioritizing education in the state budget and failing to allow victims of child rape to name their accusers as adults (a bill I sponsored).

Inside you will find a brief review of the 2011 sessions. I hope it is informative and that you will feel free to contact my office with any questions. If you would like to meet with me, or have me speak to your group, I would be happy to do so.

It's an honor to serve you.

Sincerely,

John Ahern

**Visit my district office:**

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Spokane, WA 99208

**Visit my Web site:**

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*Read my press releases, watch speeches I gave in Olympia, sign up for my e-mail updates and more!*

## REDISTRICTING

### PUBLIC MEETING

Hear how congressional and legislative district lines might be re-drawn as a result of last year's census. This is your time to comment!

### Tuesday, July 12

6 p.m. – Open house

6:30 p.m. – 8 p.m. –  
Meeting begins

**Spokane Falls Community  
College, Lounges A and B**

**3410 W. Fort George  
Wright Drive, Spokane**

**2011  
Session  
Review**

**Rep. John Ahern**  
8603 N. Division St., Suite B  
Spokane, WA 99208

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**BUDGET**

This year, the state's operating budget had to balance a \$5 billion shortfall. While state revenues are expected to increase about \$4 billion from the last two-year budget, spending in this state has gotten so out of hand that now we have to cut back. Many families and employers have already made these kinds of difficult decisions as they saw their paychecks cut or lost their jobs.

I'm pleased the final budget actually spends less than the state is expected to bring in. However, the spending decisions remain unsustainable as we will likely have more shortfalls in the years to come. This budget maintains social programs we simply cannot afford while sacrificing education. About 41 percent of the cuts in the

budget are in education. We must prioritize better. I could not support this plan because it does not reflect the principles I adhere to, or the responsible budget that taxpayers asked for last fall.

I will continue to offer solutions to find ways we can achieve savings in state services while providing the most important priorities of government to taxpayers.

I supported the capital budget, which is the state's construction budget. It pays for critical infrastructure around the state. I was glad to see \$35 million included in this budget to begin building a new medical school for Spokane. This is a desperately needed educational program in the state, and funding for the facility had great support in our community. In less than 20 years, this project is expected to create nearly 12,000 jobs and impact the Spokane region with \$2.1 billion annually. This is definitely a return on our investment!

*I will continue to offer solutions to find ways we can achieve savings in state services while providing the most important priorities of government to taxpayers.*

**JOBS**

Getting Washington back to work is my top priority right now. I'm pleased to report there were some good steps made toward protecting current jobs and getting people back to work sooner.

Early in the session, we passed reform for unemployment insurance to help protect current jobs in this instable economy. At the end of the 30-day special session, progress was made in reforming our state's workers' compensation program. This is the fund that pays workers when they are off the job because of a workplace injury. Legislation I supported will ensure we keep this fund intact, provide workers more choices, and help them get back to work sooner.

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